



BLM *News Release*

USDI, Bureau of Land Management, Farmington District, 1235 La Plata Highway, Farmington, NM 87401

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Contact: Chris Barns
(505) 599-8915
G. Martinez
(505) 599-8915

Oil and Gas Development Within the Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness, BLM Seeks Comments on Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Public Hearings in Albuquerque, Farmington, Santa Fe

In order to address a proposal to drill 13 oil and gas wells within the newly designated portion of the Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness, the Bureau of Land Management's Farmington Field Office prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and now seeks comments from the public. The Draft EIS analyzes three alternatives including the proposal by Speerex Ltd. to drill the 13 wells on two leases it obtained in May 1991.

"Preparation of this Draft EIS is a result of a Federal Claims Court Joint Stipulation between Speerex Ltd. and the BLM, which we signed in December 1997," said BLM Farmington Field Office Manager Lee Otteni. "In the Joint Stipulation, Speerex Ltd. agreed to submit applications for permits to drill the wells it proposes on the two leases, and BLM agreed to complete an EIS as mandated by the National Environmental Policy Act."

According to Otteni, the BLM gathered input from the public in 1998 during a scoping process in preparation for the Draft EIS. "That input is what we started with to identify the issues and alternatives that guided our preparation of the Draft EIS," said Otteni. "Now we need the insight and feedback from the public to ensure that we are on the right track with our analysis, and to guide where we go from here."

Three public hearings are scheduled statewide to accept oral and written comments:

Albuquerque — February 23, 7 p.m.

at the Mountain View Holiday Inn, 2020 Menaul Blvd. NE

Santa Fe — February 24, 7 p.m.

at the Santa Fe Community College, Jemez Room 1, 6401 Richards Ave.

Farmington — February 25, 7 p.m.

at the San Juan College, Room 7103, 4601 College Blvd.

Written comments on the Draft EIS will be accepted through April 30, 1999.